**Sue Nicklas**

**Beyond the Basal**

**Summer 2010**

**Assignment #4 Text Set**

**Topic:** The Sinking of the Titanic

**Description of the Unit:** This unit will give students the opportunity to explore the

sinking of the Titanic as told through the different perspectives of both fictional and nonfictional characters. Using a jig–saw approach, students will work in small groups to share the different perspectives. Each student will choose 3 activities from a think- tac-toe board to demonstrate understanding of the text read.

**Grade Level: 3rd,** 4th and 5th

**Objectives:**

* To give students an opportunity to explore the sinking of the Titanic through multiple perspectives.
* To help students see the value of looking at an event through different perspectives.
* To encourage students to take a critical look at how the perspective through which an event is told can impact the validity of the information they glean from text.
* To examine how we can use perspective in personal writing.

**State Goals:**

* **STATE GOAL 1: Read with understanding and fluency.**

**1.C.2e** Explain how authors and illustrators use text and art to express their ideas (e.g., points of view, design hues, metaphor).

* **STATE GOAL 2: Read and understand literature representative of various societies, eras and ideas.**

**2.A.2c** Identify definitive features of literary forms (e.g., realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy, narrative, nonfiction, biography, plays, electronic literary forms).

* **STATE GOAL 3: Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.**

**3.C.2a** Write for a variety of purposes and for specified audiences in a variety of forms including narrative (e.g., fiction, autobiography), expository (e.g., reports, essays) and persua­sive writings (e.g., editorials, advertisements).

Students will be asked to read one or more books from the following list and be prepared to discuss the sinking of the Titanic as told through the viewpoint of the character in their reading.

**Books**

Osborne, M.P. (1995) *Tonight on the Titanic*. Random House Books for Young Readers.

This is one of The Magic Tree House series. It is told from the perspective of Jack and Annie as they are whisked away to the decks of that ill-fated ship, the Titanic. There they must help two children find their way to a lifeboat—all while they are in danger of becoming victims of that tragic night themselves.

I chose this book because it is part of a series which is familiar to my students. This will help my struggling readers as they encounter a new topic. The story is told through the eyes of characters roughly the age of my students. This will help students connect with the text. Reading Level: Ages 8-12

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Pipe, Jim. (2007) *Titanic.* Fire Fly Books: New York

Written as a first-person account by a fictitious travel writer, this Titanic gives readers a real sense of what it was like on the ship. It is told through his notes that were to be published after the ship docked in New York.

I chose this book because it is told through the eyes of an adult. He was writing with the purpose of publication, so it is an entirely different approach than many of the other selections. It also contains interesting hands on replicas of artifacts from the Titanic. I thought this would make it appealing to my students. Reading Level: Ages 9 – 12

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Bunting, E. (1996) *SOS Titanic*. Harcourt.

Fifteen-year-old Barry O’Neill, traveling aboard the Titanic as it takes its maiden voyage, finds his life endangered when the ship hits an iceberg and begins to sink.

I chose this because it offers the reader a chance to see the sinking of the Titanic through the eyes of a teenager. Many of the feelings he encounters throughout the novel will be similar to those a modern day teenager might feel. This will help my students see that there are similarities between people today, and people from the past. It also offers a more challenging text for my stronger readers. Reading Level: Young Adult

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Jenner, C. (2001) *Survivors -- The Night the Titanic Sank*. DK Children

This story focuses on Will Tate and his family as they set sail for America aboard the ill-fated Titanic. The story starts as an adventure and ends in tragedy. This is a Step 2 book appropriate for emergent readers.

This offers the reader an easier format with a controlled vocabulary. It is told through the perspective of a young boy and his family. It will give my struggling readers a way to learn about the Titanic and offer important contributions to the small group discussion.

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Spedden, D.C.S., McGaw L. & Leighton H.C. (1994) *Polar The Titanic Bear.*  Little, Brown and Company: Boston, Massachusetts.

This account of the Titanic is told from the perspective of a stuffed polar bear, who belongs to a young boy named Douglas Spedden. Polar describes the splendor of the ship as he travels with Douglas and his family aboard the Titanic. Polar is able to give a sensitive portrayal of a frightening event in history.

I chose this because it is an entirely different perspective than what might be expected. It offers the reader to see that history can be told through a fantasy approach, and yet offer valuable information. It will encourage a reader to think outside the box, and possibly motivate them to try a new approach in their personal writing.

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Quinn, P. (1999) *Dusk to Dawn: Survivor Accounts of the Last Night on the*

*Titanic*. Fantail Press

This story begins at 8 o’clock as the sun sets, and continues until dawn when the reader sees the last life boat taken aboard the rescue ship Carpathia. There are eyewitness accounts providing details from the passengers and crew. The most powerful part of this book is the illustrations taking us through the hours between dusk and dawn on the Titanic.

I chose this book because of its stunning illustrations. I want my students to see that text can include more than just words, and that pictures can take the place of a thousand words.

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Crisp, M. (2004) *White Star: A Dog on the Titanic.* Scholastic Inc: New York, NY.

Twelve-year-old Sam Harris, a passenger on the *Titanic*, is excited to discover dogs aboard. Helping in the kennel brings a welcome distraction--especially when it comes to caring for Star, the Irish setter that belongs to the ship's captain. Star and Sam quickly bond, and when disaster strikes, the boy can't leave the dog behind. Sam is a sympathetic character, and Crisp weaves together fact and fiction as he paints a tragedy-laced survival story of a boy and a dog.

I chose this because I thought it would appeal to animal lovers. It also tells the story through the perspective of someone who cared for the animals on the Titanic. It is one more way to think about the Titanic.

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Stewart, D. & Salariva,D. (2000) *You Wouldn't Want to Sail on the Titanic*.

Children’s Press.

History is told in an unusual way. Humor and fact are balanced to offer information in a non threatening format. Pictures, cartoons and diagrams are used throughout.

I choose this because it is not the typical story format. It allows students to see that information can be presented in many formats.

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National Geographic (1996) *I Survived the Titanic* Retrieved July 6, 2010. <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/media/world/9607/titanic.html>

I chose this website because it contains a nonfictional account of the Titanic as told through the eyes of a 12 year old girl.